

## **COMMITTEE ON LANDS AND BUILDINGS**

**June 10, 2002**

**5:00 PM**

Chairman Thibault called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Thibault, Gatsas, Pinard, Garrity

Absent: Alderman DeVries

Messrs: R. MacKenzie, F. Rusczyk

Chairman Thibault addressed Item 3 of the agenda:

Report from Planning regarding alternative uses for the Carol M. Rines Center.

Mr. MacKenzie stated I have some handouts for the Committee and I will give you a couple of minutes to read it. Just to recap with the Committee we had brought in a proposal that looked at two options. One was putting into the Rines Center the various City departments of which there are about five which are primarily human services and redoing the old West Side Community Center as a library and building a new free-standing senior center at that site. That was one of the options. Another option looked at putting a senior center in with the Welfare Department, OYS, archives and a training room. The Committee asked for another alternative which looked at placing the senior center in with the Health Department in the Rines Center and had not concluded what to do with the other departments, but that is something that the group would look at later. This quick assessment is of the senior center and the Health Department in the Rines Center. We did have the assistance of Fred Matuszewski, CMK Architects, in reviewing this. Although we didn't have time to get a very solid cost estimate, he gave us a rough cost estimate. The cost estimate, however, does not include such things as a telephone system, connections to the City's mainframe computer and other types of hardware, which can be relatively expensive. To recap this particular proposal, we do have small sheets, which show the layout of the Health Department and the senior center. We do have a larger board if that is easier for any of the Aldermen because the larger board is color-coded. In reviewing the plans with the architect, we did determine in this particular scenario that the senior center would take a portion of the lower level so the senior center would be all on one level rather than multiple levels and the Health Department would have to be split up on the three remaining levels. The top floor of the building, which was originally proposed for

an archive center because it is unfinished, would then have to be finished and fitted up for one of the Health Department organizations.

Chairman Thibault asked is that included in your renovation costs.

Mr. MacKenzie answered yes that would be included. Looking at the building, the top floor, which is the smallest of the floors would be the Health Department. The center level, which accesses on to Elm Street would be the Health Department and the lower level, which is the largest of the levels of the building would be split between the senior center and a couple of divisions of the Health Department. The cost for putting those organizations into the building is roughly \$800,000. Again, there will be some other miscellaneous costs so in total we would guesstimate that the acquisition fit-up cost for that operation would be roughly \$3.3 million. If you assume then that with a senior center going in there you would rehab the existing West Side Community Center for the West Side Library, that would add roughly \$700,000 in costs. So the total for those four departments would total roughly \$4 million. That does not, of course, address four other units. It does not include the Office of Youth Services, Welfare Department, City Clerk archives and the Training Center. In putting in the Health Department and senior center, they would not fit at the proposed sizes. In this particular plan both operations were shrunk. They were shrunk roughly proportional so that the Health Department would shrink from a little over 18,000 square feet down to 15,500 square feet. The senior center would shrink from roughly 15,000 square feet down to 11,700 square feet. We did internally...we have not spoken with any of the departments primarily because of the time factor. We simply didn't have the time to do it so we can't tell you how the departments would react to those. We tried to take the functions and the spaces out of the programs that were in our opinion least important of the four spaces but again we have not talked to the specific departments to see how they would react to those reductions. That is a quick summary of what the Committee asked us to do and we are available to answer additional questions.

Alderman Gatsas asked the telephone system was not figured in either Option 1 or Option 2.

Mr. MacKenzie answered neither of the options have the final telephone system.

Alderman Gatsas asked the additional \$325,000 or \$355,000 between Option 1 and Option 3, the renovating costs, can you tell me what that is.

Mr. MacKenzie answered that is primarily finishing the upstairs which is unfinished and there is no heating ventilation system or bathrooms so those would be funds to finish that top space for office use.

Alderman Gatsas asked do you mean the mezzanine area.

Mr. MacKenzie answered correct.

Alderman Gatsas asked is there a reason why you would propose to put bathrooms up there.

Mr. MacKenzie answered typically in an office space that is required by code.

Alderman Gatsas stated well we understand that the City of Manchester doesn't have to follow code.

Mr. MacKenzie stated when we recommend projects we have a lot of ADA requirements and other codes that we try to follow because we expect others to follow them as well.

Alderman Gatsas replied right but neither one of those bathrooms are handicapped accessible.

Mr. MacKenzie responded this floor would then be handicapped accessible. We could potentially make them accessible depending on how many toilets and other things we put into those rooms.

Alderman Gatsas asked so the mezzanine area that I am looking at of 2,800 square feet that you show on this diagram as being open, the only renovation cost that you have done up there are two men's rooms and two storage rooms.

Mr. MacKenzie answered no. What you don't see is all of the infrastructure costs – the plumbing system, heating system, ventilation system, air conditioning, etc. There is a lot of infrastructure like lighting improvements, making sure that the fire exits are properly done so there is infrastructure to go in there.

Alderman Gatsas stated let me ask the question another way then. The mezzanine area is wide open as it is currently. Is there current heat and electricity and ventilation there now?

Mr. MacKenzie replied there is electricity. There is heat potentially available but not set up. There is no ventilation and no air conditioning system.

Alderman Gatsas stated I am just looking at this plan. This area here is just left as it is, is that correct or am I missing something?

Mr. MacKenzie replied this actually would become lab space and there is also a cost associated with the lab improvements. I am not sure if you are looking at the right plan.

Alderman Gatsas responded I am looking at the one you just gave us. No, I guess I am not. I am looking at the old one. Sorry. I apologize. I was looking at the old one.

Alderman Garrity asked if you could just back up a bit you said a \$3.3 million cost. Could you back up and tell me what those costs are for?

Mr. MacKenzie answered the acquisition cost is going to be \$2,325,000. There will be roughly \$800,000 in specific renovation costs to the building. Then there are generally other soft costs involved including moving costs, setting up for utilities and setting up for communications but not including the phone system itself.

Alderman Garrity stated I know that we got this at the last meeting but what is the total yearly rental cost for the Health Department and Welfare and Youth Services.

Mr. MacKenzie replied I might see if Kevin Clougherty has his sheets. They haven't analyzed this proposal for today but they did analyze the costs both...

Alderman Garrity interjected I just need the total rental cost for those three agencies.

Mr. Clougherty stated I didn't bring the sheets with me. I would be happy to run downstairs and get them if you would like.

Alderman Lopez stated in reference to the letter of May 29 where Randy Sherman indicated that the least expensive alternative would be to locate the Health Department in the Rines Center along with OYS and the Welfare Department and a stand alone senior center, in comparison what is your recommendation.

Mr. MacKenzie replied we don't have all the information to compare because we don't have what we would do with the other four units. I mean the City could try to buy a building. It could continue to lease. It could try to build a building but until we have the cost for those four other units, I couldn't give you a very specific comparison.

Alderman Lopez stated you also said that you didn't have an opportunity to speak to the department heads, i.e. the Health Director in regards to decreasing the space. I know that he was very adamant to the degree that he needed more space and if it

okay with you, Mr. Chairman, could we have Mr. Rusczek comment on having the senior center and the Health Department together which is a good combination but I am wondering if there is something we don't know here that he can add to this since he was speaking last night.

Chairman Thibault stated before we hear from him there are just two things that I would like to bring up. Bob if you will enlighten me for just one minute I think I forgot something. On the senior center you are taking them down from 18,000 to 15,000 is that what you said?

Mr. MacKenzie replied the original request by the senior center committee was for 24,000 square feet. Ultimately we worked with them to look at a proposal that would be significantly smaller at 15,000 square feet.

Chairman Thibault asked did they agree with that.

Mr. MacKenzie answered this proposal here is only 11,700 square feet.

Chairman Thibault stated the other thing I wanted to look at is the Health Department requested something in the area of 23,000 or 24,000 and you are cutting it down to 18,000.

Mr. MacKenzie replied one of the numbers is correct. In the proposal they were at a little over 18,000 and this proposal cuts them down to 15,500.

Chairman Thibault stated that is really my question. Having talked to Fred in the past on this I am really concerned about what is happening in the United States right now and how some of these health departments in some of our cities are eventually...well we never know when it is going to happen. Something could happen and we could be behind the eight ball here and that really concerns me that we would cut this down. Of any department in the City I would have thought that this year we would not have cut the Health Department down especially if we are going to find a new location for them no matter where they are going. I would think that we should try to give them the space that they need in order to try to do things that if I heard Fred right they feel they are going to have to be doing very shortly if they are not doing it already. The senior center being cut down to that extent is somewhat my concern also.

Mr. Rusczek stated this is the first opportunity I have had to see this plan. My first quick look over of the plan is one of the great challenges that we found when we were located on three floors in the building we are in was that then there becomes duplicative costs for receptionists and back-up. You need someone at a counter to greet people as they come in for permits and we need two folks working at our

clinic counter. If we are split on three floors and actually if you look at the first floor we are split in two areas, it becomes much more difficult and costly in the long run to add the staff that you would need to provide the appropriate receptionist and administrative support. Looking at the layout here real quickly I think what has happened somewhat is by trying to compress some of the areas into the confines of the space that is there we have administrative offices somewhat mixed in with clinic space, which isn't a separation for both privacy and safety reasons that we want to achieve and wanted to in looking at the different functions. I would certainly be incorrect if I said that this plan is a better fit or would work better than the earlier plan. Clearly it wouldn't even though there is a savings of about 3,000 feet. It looks like the other thing we have given up is and maybe it is up on the third floor but one of the roles of the Health Department is that we have a satellite dish where we are able to downlink presentations from CDC. When we hold the presentations we bring in healthcare providers from the community. If there is an update on TB or an emerging infectious disease, our satellite dish that we currently have brings that stuff down current and we bring healthcare providers together so what we were really looking forward to with the other plan was the fact that there was a large room where we could convene the public and healthcare providers to be able to do that sort of work efficiently. Alderman Lopez I forgot the nature of your question that you had asked me to come up and talk about.

Alderman Lopez replied I believe you answered the question.

Chairman Thibault asked, Fred, looking at this again and I am not trying to sway you in any way, fashion or manner but you are still going to be on three floors here as I look at this.

Alderman Gatsas asked Fred you are certainly not telling me that the inconvenience of three floors because you have to have receptionists...do you have a receptionist now on all three floors.

Mr. Rusczek answered no actually we moved down to two floors just for that reason.

Alderman Gatsas asked do you have a receptionist on each one of those floors now.

Mr. Rusczek answered we have a receptionist on each of the two floors. We have a receptionist for the Environmental Health Division and two clinic receptionists for our clinic space. So being on three floors it would be that much more challenging. The receptionist for Environmental Health also serves as the receptionist for all of our public health improvement work...

Alderman Gatsas interjected if you were on one floor would you be letting go of a receptionist.

Mr. Rusczek answered no.

Alderman Gatsas stated so it doesn't matter how many floors you are on with the receptionists you have, it is just based on the departments you have so it is not like you have added staff to accommodate different floors.

Mr. Rusczek stated if we were on three floors and in this place not only three floors but two separate areas where you would be going through a new door, someone has to be there to greet people. Now on our two floors we have one person who serves as the general receptionist for all of the functions...for the entire Health Department there are three clerical staff. We had to cut a half time administrative assistant out so we are not over staffed but obviously if we move to three floors we would be challenged there. We need two in the clinics so one can back-up when the other one leaves because that is the busiest part of our operation during the day.

Alderman Gatsas stated I would think that the functionality of multi-floors is shown throughout this City. There are law offices and banks that are on multi-levels and they don't have a receptionist at each floor. They tell you which one is the main floor for entry and that is where you go. I would assume that the City could do the same accommodation. I don't think that people would just arbitrarily decide which floor they are going into.

Mr. Rusczek replied the difference is the type of customers we have. We have people who come in for permits and we have people who come in for clinics. That would be the reason why we would have different receptionists. It is based on function.

Alderman Pinard stated you mentioned Brown School as a potential apartment, Bob, and you are talking about X number of properties in back of the Library. Before you put that on the market, the construction of Brown School, how much time would be lapsing there? Do you know what I am saying? In other words if you sell Brown School you don't know how long it is going to be on the market and if you buy those buildings and rip them down and construct the Brown School is still for sale. In the meantime you have 12 or so families that are out in the street because we do not have housing here. I think that has to be taken into consideration before we do anything.

Mr. MacKenzie replied we are aware that there is interest in the Brown School and we could potentially simultaneously have both operations under construction. I believe that we could sell the Brown School for housing and that there is enough demand for housing and enough potential developers interested that that could be underway very quickly. So there might still be some time lag but it would not be a significant time lag.

Alderman Gatsas asked, Bob, if we were doing a financial comparison that is really apples to apples, doing an expansion of the library has nothing to do with that on the financial cost because either we are going to do that or we aren't going to do it and that is really off to the side because whether we take the Rines Center and put the Health Department and the seniors in or whether we build a free standing building for the seniors on the West Side, the library is a totally different situation so to include that in this price cost really isn't fair. If we are looking at the comparisons we really should be looking at only three comparisons. We should be looking at the purchase price, which is the same and then we should be looking at either renovation option 1, 2 or 3 because the phone systems and the auxiliary things that you are talking about really are at a different level. We then should be looking at what the additional cost for Youth Services and Welfare are and whether that is worth an additional \$3 million to look at the other option because that is really what we are looking at. Certainly, Mr. Chairman, I am fully well aware of the bio-terrorism and everything else that is happening in this country and if I said to Mr. Ruscsek if we gave you 30,000 square feet does that mean that we in the City of Manchester would never have to worry about that, I don't think his answer is going to be yes. I don't know if the square footage amount is based on whether bio-terrorism is going to happen in Manchester and I think going from the 10,000 square feet or are you in 8,000 now? How many square feet are you in now?

Mr. Ruscsek replied we are in over 9,000 but again...

Alderman Gatsas interjected so you are in 9,000 and going to 15,500, which is better than a 60% increase.

Mr. Ruscsek stated again that 9,000+ square feet doesn't include a lot of space that is in the building. We don't include hallways or the big large meeting room or our storage space. If you added it all up, it is actually much more than that right now.

Alderman Gatsas stated so really looking at the comparison and looking at the senior center comparison of going from 15,000 square feet to 11,700 when we really have 100 people that are attending the West Side Center and what functionally that would do for us here giving them the same amount of parking spaces, reducing the cost and putting them in a facility that is state-of-the-



art...now I would think that if 300 people are swarming that this Board at any time would make a commitment that they would move and build another senior center because it certainly would warrant that type of occupation and space if that many people were going to it. At 11,700 square feet if we continue only having the same 100 people that are going, I would say that we have made an adequate increase for those people to live comfortably in an area. I don't think this is a slight on seniors. I think this is an opportunity. Should they grow then we should build them another senior center that is larger and more accommodating but until they fit into this senior center that is almost three times the size that they are in now on how many floors, I think there are three floors over at the West Side facility? Isn't that on three floors?

Mr. MacKenzie replied two floors.

Alderman Gatsas stated so to give them access on one floor I think is certainly the way to go. Reducing what we are looking at for costs of purchasing three three-family buildings over there, eliminating them and tearing them down when we can't find affordable housing now and having 55 parking spaces for both the library and the senior center doesn't make sense. It is only going to put us in a problem and seniors are going to be calling for parking continually. I think that when you are looking at the cost and we have reduced by some \$3 million the cost of building a new senior center and the renovations of the library would have to stand on its own. It has nothing to do with the senior center.

Chairman Thibault stated if you are going to refurbish the West Side Center as it is now I would think that it would also include part of the things that you are going to do for the library and I don't think we can share the cost exactly the way he is sharing it there. I think that some of the costs of renovation of the building and the enlargement of the building would be for both so some of that would be shared no doubt. It would not be so much for the library and so much for the senior center. The other point is...

Alderman Gatsas interjected I don't think that is true, Alderman.

Chairman Thibault asked could you answer that, Bob. Is that right or wrong?

Mr. MacKenzie answered I don't think there are a lot of shared functions between the proposed senior center there...

Chairman Thibault interjected as part of the building I mean.

Mr. MacKenzie stated there would be interaction. Seniors could use the library and they would not need their own library space per say but there is not a lot of

shared facilities. You wouldn't have a shared kitchen, per say so other than library space there are probably not a lot of shared functions. There would be a change in the cost. If you went to renovate the existing West Side Community Center without putting the addition on, the cost is going to be higher for renovation because it is a smaller project and your bids will always come in higher. Other than that, there is not a lot of shared functions other than potential use of the library.

Chairman Thibault asked, Fred, didn't you tell me last week that there are new functions that you must do now that you weren't doing several months ago. I wonder if you can make this Committee aware of that and how much space that may take if it will take any more space.

Mr. Rusczek answered there are certainly the growing issues of bio-terrorism in this country and that is an avenue that health departments have to go into but that being said, if bio-terrorism went away tomorrow, the bio-terrorism, the Anthrax outbreak in the fall has pretty much woken up this country that we have had 20 newly emerged diseases in the last 20 years and certainly concerns of things that could happen in another part of the country and end up at our doorstep at any time. We are not separated by anything but a plane flight from anyplace in the world in a day. Some of the areas that we need to expand upon is we need to expand upon our clinic space and the reason that we will be getting outside funding to add a physician with a public health background is so that we can very quickly react to a newly introduced infection and to deal with some of our old friends like Tuberculosis. Just Tuberculosis if you go back 10 years ago the number of home visits we make for Tuberculosis today is ten fold. We do have active cases. We become like any other community in the country. We are an international city where the things that we were not exposed to because of our good public health are at times threatened because of folks that come from other places in the world where there are infectious diseases. In addition, the other role that is really growing for us is our community role. Health Departments should do more steering than providing services so a lot of the work that we do is convening. Of great interest to us is having that room where we can not only provide the satellite downlink but where we can meet with our community partners to prepare community strategies rather than just Health Department work.

Chairman Thibault stated that is one point right there that I would like you to elaborate a little more on. Let the Committee know exactly where that is at. From what you and I talked about I got the feeling that you were looking for more space because you need it or you are going to need it and now we are trying to cut you and that is the thing that bothers me.

Mr. Rusczek replied well now we hold a lot of meetings at the Verizon building across from City Hall. It is not convenient for us. The other issues we face routinely is that when we do hold meetings downtown when we are bringing a lot of folks in there just isn't a place for parking. We have a large number of people who come to our clinics, about 30,000 visits to date. We are talking about bringing folks in and the access that we don't have in the Verizon building for meetings is something like the access to the satellite downlinks that we have. The other piece that just dawned on me is that many communities are realizing that while we have an emergency center today in the Fire Department, most communities are beginning to plan for a back-up emergency operation center. I know we are not New York City but one of the issues that they had when the World Trade Center was hit was their emergency operation center was part of the World Trade Center complex and they had to relocate. A building with adequate space would provide a back-up for police and fire and other functions in the City should they need space at any given moment.

Chairman Thibault asked, Fred, is there any cost for you using the Verizon building.

Mr. Rusczek answered yes. The cost comes in inefficiencies. They allow us to use the space but there are inefficiencies of carting stuff back and forth and the inability to do things like link to our audiovisual stuff and the satellite downlinks.

Alderman Gatsas moved to put the Health Department and Senior Center in the Rines building. Alderman Pinard duly seconded the motion. Chairman Thibault called for a vote. Aldermen Thibault and Garrity voiced their opposition. Chairman Thibault declared a tie vote.

Alderman Pinard moved to send the proposals to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. Alderman Garrity duly seconded the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

There being no further business, on motion of Alderman Garrity, duly seconded by Alderman Gatsas, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee